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SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGING, DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY

ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

Letter dated 25 April 1995 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the conclusions and the appeal to the world public adopted at the meeting of medical experts and health workers of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia regarding the impact of the United Nations Security Council sanctions on the health of the population of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, held in Belgrade on 7 April 1995, together with the appeal of the Assembly of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, Republic of Serbia.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annexes circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under items 107, 109 and 112 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Dragomir DJOKIĆ
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

* A/50/50.

ANNEX I

Conclusions of the meeting of medical experts and health workers of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, held in Belgrade on 7 April 1995

The participants in the meeting convened on 7 April 1995, World Health Day, on the theme "The impact of the United Nations Security Council sanctions on the health of the population of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia", focused on issues related to the following areas:

1. The impact of the sanctions on perinatal morbidity and mortality;

2. The impact of the sanctions on the health status and health care of the elderly;

3. "A world without polio by the year 2000", as the theme recommended by the World Health Organization.

World Health Day 1995 is commemorated under the slogan "A world without polio by the year 2000". Health workers all over Yugoslavia are joining to implement this recommendation of the World Health Organization to eradiate polio in spite of the difficulties in implementing the programme under the Security Council sanctions.

Fourteen reports were submitted by renowned professionals from medical institutions from all over the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The reports were based on official data, collected, processed and analysed in health institutions in which the authors of the reports are employed.

From the data reported it was concluded that the consequences of the sanctions were most serious in the health care of the most vulnerable categories of the population: pregnant women, children and the elderly.

Apart from statistical data indicative of the negative influences of the crisis and United Nations sanctions on the health of the population, a general collective suffering of the population is present that cannot be expressed by statistics. Negative effects of the sanctions are foreseen in the increased number of diseased and dead and, especially, through their delayed effect on the mental and physical development of schoolchildren and adolescents, leaving a lasting mark on the biological integrity of the population.

Data for the first two years under the Security Council sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, for 1992 and 1993, presented in the Statistical Yearbook of the Federal Institute for Public Health, as the official data for the country, prove that sanctions were disastrous to the health of the whole nation.

In the first two years under the sanctions 24,000 fewer children were born than in 1991, while the increase in deaths was 10,122 cases. The reduced number of liveborn children and the increase in mortality resulted in a reduced birth

rate from 15 per cent in 1986 to 13 per cent in 1993, and in an increased mortality rate, from 9.6 per cent in 1986 to 10.2 per cent in 1993.

In 1993 there was a sudden and multiple increase in mortality from certain ailments relative to the period before the sanctions.

Mortality of the elderly, under the diagnosis of senility without psychosis, increased more than 5.5 times (567 per cent).

The highest increase in mortality in the population as a whole in 1993 compared to the period before the sanctions was recorded for the following diseases:

- hypertensive heart disease, 434 per cent;
- chronic forms of ischaemic heart disease, 312 per cent;
- diabetes mellitus, 152 per cent;
- chronic bronchitis, 135 per cent;
- brain haemorrhage, 134 per cent;
- respiratory tuberculosis, 52 per cent;
- suicides, 20 per cent.

The reports on the impact of the sanctions on perinatal morbidity and mortality in 1993 and 1994 show a very significant increase of these parameters due to the lack of equipment, drugs, sanitary consumables and other medical products caused directly by the Security Council sanctions.

According to the data of the Institute for Gynaecology and Obstetrics of the Emergency Clinical Centre of Serbia in Belgrade, the number of deliveries has been reduced, and the number of premature and underweight ones increased. The number of cases with surgical deliveries increased from 8 per cent in 1989 to 13 per cent in 1994, showing an increase of 62 per cent in 1994.

In comparison to 1989 the number of imminent abortions increased by 255 per cent, premature imminent deliveries by 527 per cent, cases of pregnancy-induced hypertension by 251 per cent, cases of disseminated intramuscular haemorrhage twofold and cases of neonatal sepsis sixfold.

On the basis of the data from the Narodni Front Clinic for Gynaecology and Obstetrics in Belgrade an increase in perinatal mortality (mortality of newborns during and immediately after delivery) has been reported - from 17.5 per cent in 1989 to 21 per cent in 1993, an increase of 22 per cent; infant deaths among live births weighing less than 2,500 g in 1989 were 92 per cent, and in 1993 140 per cent, an increase of 52 per cent. In the group of mature newborns 2 per cent were lost in 1989 and 15 per cent in 1994, that is 7.5 times more.

The data of the Clinical Hospital Centre in Pristina show that the number of premature newborns in 1989 was 7.9 per cent, and in 1994 it was 14.2 per cent, i.e., an increase of 79 per cent.

Early neonatal mortality (liveborn deaths under seven days) was 30.7 per cent in 1989 and 44.7 per cent in 1994, which is an increase of 45 per cent.

The data of the Clinic for Gynaecology and Obstetrics of Novi Sad for 1994 compared to 1989 show that the weight of male newborns was 140 g less, while the female newborns weighed 294 g less; the length of the newborns was 0.54 cm less in 1994 than in 1989. The figure for imminent abortion was 2.6 per cent in 1989 and 6.2 per cent in 1994, an increase of 136 per cent. Intrauterine growth retardation increased from 0.89 per cent in 1989 to 2.22 per cent in 1994, that is by 160 per cent.

At the Clinic for Gynaecology and Obstetrics of Niš, the number of children left behind in 1994 is three times more than in the period before the sanctions; the number of cases of pneumonia increased 2.6 times; congenital anomalies of newborns increased 4 times, and the number of children referred to other centres was 3.5 times more.

At the Clinic for Gynaecology and Obstetrics of the Clinical Hospital Centre of Kragujevac the number of deliveries in 1994 was considerably reduced compared to 1989 - from 3,209 to 2,465 deliveries, i.e., by 30 per cent, and perinatal mortality increased from 6.1 per cent to 9.9 per cent, i.e., by 62 per cent.

The number of children admitted to the Institute for preterm infants in Belgrade in 1994, compared to 1989, increased as follows: from central Serbia by 15 per cent, from Kosovo and Metohija by 239 per cent. Special transportation for preterm infants in 1989 covered 64 per cent and in 1994 36 per cent of patients treated in the Institute, a reduction of 77 per cent. Morbidity in 1994 compared to 1989 was incremental in sepsis (111 per cent), meningitis (110 per cent), enterocolitis (85 per cent) and salmonella infections (254 per cent). Hospital mortality of prematures increased from 21 per cent in 1989 to 30 per cent in 1993 and 21 per cent in 1994, that is by 42 per cent and 23 per cent.

In Montenegro the total annual number of deliveries ranged between 10,000 and 11,000 for almost two decades. It dropped from 9,636 in 1989 to 8,645 in 1994, that is by 11 per cent. The infant mortality rate fell constantly, from 20 per cent in 1985 to 11 per cent in 1991 (except for 1986). Since 1992 the infant mortality rate is on the rise, to 13.2 per cent in 1992 and 15.2 per cent in 1994, representing a rise of 15 per cent for the two years observed. The rate of stillbirths increased from 3.8 per cent in 1989 to 4.8 per cent in 1994, that is by 26 per cent. The newborn deaths in the infant total mortality represent 60 per cent to 76 per cent and the number was 10 per cent to 15 per cent higher in 1993 and 1994 than in the years preceding the sanctions. There is an interesting phenomenon in Montenegro: the number of male newborns related to 100 female newborns increased from 104.8 in 1989 to 113 in 1992 and 111 in 1993.

In the Gynaecologic and Obstetric Department of the Clinical Hospital Centre of Podgorica newborn morbidity increased from 18 per cent in 1989 to 26 per cent in 1994, an increase of 40 per cent. The number of caesarean sections increased from 133 cases in 1989 to 225 in 1994, or by 69 per cent. The rate of children born by caesarean section increased 2.5 times, and those born with the aid of a vacuum extractor 2.4 times. The number of newborns with asphyxia increased by 28 per cent in 1994 compared to 1989. The number of underweight newborns in 1994 increased by 32 per cent compared to 1989. Metabolic disorders were present more frequently in 1994 than in 1989: in acidosis (146 per cent), hypoglycaemia (186 per cent) and dehydration (37 per cent).

In the Children's Clinic of the Clinical Hospital Centre of Podgorica the number of hospitalized children increased from 3,588 in 1989 to 4,616 in 1994, or by 28 per cent. The number of deaths among hospital-treated children increased from a rate of 6.6 per cent in 1989 to 25.1 per cent in 1994, or 4.8 times. Owing to the decrease in live births in Montenegro from a rate of 15.8 per cent in 1989 to 13.8 per cent in 1994, or by 15 per cent, and owing to the increase in the mortality rate, the natural growth rate decreased from 9.5 per cent in 1989 to 6.9 per cent in 1994, or by 37 per cent. On 7 March 1995 the figures for hospital-treated children in this children's clinic, according to ethnic affiliation, were: Montenegrins and Serbs 73 per cent, Moslems 11.4 per cent, Albanians 5.3 per cent, which is identical to the ethnic structure of the population of Montenegro.

In the Neonatal Centre of the Children's Clinic of the Clinical Hospital Centre of Podgorica there is a significant increase in stillbirths over 1,000 g of weight, from 0.5 per cent in 1989 to 1.01 per cent in 1993 and 0.93 per cent in 1994, that is by 102 per cent and 86 per cent.

Within the framework of the theme "The impact of the sanctions on the health status and health care of the elderly", the data reported at this meeting show an evident increase in the morbidity and mortality of the elderly during the sanctions period. Previous health problems of the elderly are exacerbated and the frequency of new diseases is also increasing.

The number of elderly over 60 years of age has increased in the world as well as in our country.

In the Republic of Serbia, 11.4 per cent of the inhabitants were in the group over 60 years of age, and in 1990 it was 15 per cent.

It is anticipated that by the end of this century there will be 20 per cent of the elderly in the population structure.

According to the data of the Institute for Gerontology, Home Treatment and Care in Belgrade and of the Institute for Public Health of Montenegro at Podgorica the number of medical services delivered by general practitioners fell from 972 per 1,000 inhabitants in 1989 to 630 in 1993, or by 35 per cent. At the same time hospitalization of the elderly has increased by 24 per cent.

In the Clinical Institute of Gerontology of the Clinical Hospital Centre of Zvezdara in Belgrade the number of hospital-treated elderly has increased by 18.6 per cent. The mortality of the hospital-treated elderly has increased by 38 per cent in 1994, compared to 1989. The number of stomach ulcer cases has doubled. The number of elderly females with pneumonia increased by 91 per cent. The number of deaths within 48 hours of admission to the hospital was 23 per cent of the total number of deaths and this figure has increased 2.5 times from 1989 to 1994.

The reports submitted at this meeting proved strongly that the Security Council sanctions against Yugoslavia, and especially the sanctions imposed on health, directly damaged the health and biological integrity of the general population, especially pregnant women, children and the elderly. Thus the population is condemned to collective illness, suffering and dying. The sanctions hence amount to an act of direct and typical genocide of the international community against the peoples of Yugoslavia. The medical staff of our country is amazed by the decision made to prevent our participation in international scientific and expert cooperation, including publication transfer. The damage is mutual because our science has greatly contributed to the overall development of world science, including medicine.

It is also proposed to the health institutions and health authorities to further investigate and follow up on the impact of the sanctions on the health of our population, and to practise other scientific methods apart from the official statistical data in order to provide more comprehensive and unbiased reports.

ANNEX II

Appeal to the world public

Today, on 7 April 1995, World Health Day, when health workers all over the world celebrate it, as we used to do until three years ago, by summing up their results in the implementation of the WHO Programme "Health for All by the Year 2000", we the Yugoslav health workers are forced, in conformity with our situation, to do it by a Yugoslav professional gathering on the theme "Effects of sanctions of the United Nations Security Council on the health of the people of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia". We are taking stock of negative, devastating and genocide effects of sanctions on the health of the people of Yugoslavia and demonstrate in an expert way, corroborated by arguments, to what extent the sanctions have held us back in the implementation of the health care of the population, how much damage, pain and evil was inflicted and how many innocent lives were cut off as a result.

Tragic and extensive consequences of the effects of the sanctions have already taken their toll in a high and sudden rise in mortality of all categories of the population, and of children, the elderly and chronic patients in particular. An abrupt fall in natality, in the natural increase of the population and, for the first time in the past 50 years, a rise in infant mortality, have come about. Only in 1990 and 1993, 24,000 fewer children were born, while 10,000 persons more died. Among the causes of the increased number of deaths is the occurrence of those from which people have not died for decades both in our country and world wide: intestinal infections, tuberculosis, other infections. Mortality in certain branches of medicine has even increased many times over. An enormous rise in malignant, cardiovascular, mental and many other diseases has occurred. The epidemiological situation of communicable diseases is dramatic. Mass epidemics, endemic hotbeds and diseases that had been eradicated now appear again.

The sanctions threaten in the most direct way the health and biological integrity of the whole people of Yugoslavia, who are doomed to illness, suffering and dying. Owing to such a situation, even the provision of elementary health care is questionable while vital rights to life, health care and treatment of the citizens of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia are threatened.

We, Yugoslav physicians and other health workers, call upon all the progressive forces of mankind, and particularly cultural and humanitarian organizations, to raise their voices, guided by principles of humanism, ethics and democracy, against the perils of international sanctions imposed on the people of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and call for putting an end to that unique concentration camp in the world of today.

We are urging intellectuals of all the countries of the world, as the conscience of mankind, to use their good offices in an organized way with government and political bodies in their respective countries to initiate on the basis of the Charter of the United Nations an action before the Security

Council, to abolish the sanctions against Yugoslavia as a distinct condemnation of the innocent people to collective illness and dying.

On behalf of the children we are inviting all States of the world: do your utmost to eliminate the collective punishment of women, children, the aged, the sick and infirm and to respect the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

We particularly appeal to the World Health Organization to intercede energetically with the United Nations, guided by illustrious principles of the ethics of health workers and legal standards of the Constitution of WHO, in favour of an urgent lifting of the sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, especially of sanctions in the field of health, putting thereby an end to the tragic agony and disastrous misfortune of this people.

Let sanctions never more be introduced against any nation in the world.

ANNEX III

Appeal adopted on 7 April 1995 by the Assembly of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina

On the occasion of World Health Day, the Assembly of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina has adopted the following appeal:

The economic blockade of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia imposed by the United Nations in 1992 has resulted in the economic crisis which has affected most seriously the most vulnerable segments of the population, i.e., children, the old and ailing.

Owing to the lack of medicine and medical equipment as well as a drastic fall of the standard of living, the number of the ailing and the mortality rate are increasing. We therefore call upon you to support the lifting of the sanctions imposed on our country.

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